

Community Meeting #2 Activity Summary

Project:	North/West BPC Resiliency Project
Topic:	Community Meeting #2 Activity Summary
Date:	Thursday, December 16th, 2021 6:00 pm – 7:30 pm
Location:	Virtual Zoom Meeting

Project Team Meeting Facilitators

Name	Agency	Role
Claudia Filomena	BPCA	Director of Capital Projects
Gwen Dawson	BPCA	Vice President of Real Property
Nick Sbordone	BPCA	Vice President of Communications and Public Affairs
Garrett Avery	AECOM	Leader, Project Definition & PDB Design Review
Hogan Edelberg	AECOM	Stakeholder & Community Engagement Lead
Nora Madonick	ASC	Stakeholder & Community Engagement
Michael Henrich	ASC	Stakeholder & Community Engagement

Executive Summary

Battery Park City Authority hosted Community Meeting #2 on Dec. 16, 2021. This marked the fifth official public engagement touchpoint for the North/West Battery Park City Resiliency Project (NWBPCRP). Community Meeting #1 was held in August 2021 and three walking workshops, or walkshops, were held in October and November 2021.

Conducted utilizing virtual teleconferencing platform Zoom, the NWBPCRP team provided project background information and introduced attendees to the concept of a Project Definition that will be included in the upcoming Request for Proposals for the Progressive Design Builder (PDB) for the project. Following this brief presentation, the 55 public meeting attendees joined project team representatives in Zoom breakout rooms to share their thoughts on topics related to the Project Definition. Participants discussed the following three areas:

- Activity 1: Current Uses of Battery Park City
- Activity 2: Shared Priorities for Battery Park City
- Activity 3: New Opportunities in Battery Park City

Participants were informed that the project team organizes Battery Park City into Reach Areas, as described below, and asked the groups to direct their comments toward specific Reach Areas whenever possible:

- Reach 1: Tribeca/BMCC/HRPK
- Reach 2: North Esplanade
- Reach 3: Rockefeller Park
- Reach 4: Belvedere Plaza
- Reach 5: North Cove
- Reach 6: South Esplanade
- Reach 7: South Cove

Responses from participants were recorded using the virtual whiteboard engagement platform, Miro. A total of 137 responses were recorded on sticky notes that were placed onto Miro whiteboards. The sections below catalogue the responses across the three breakout rooms by activity, followed by screen grabs of the individual breakout rooms' Miro boards.

Activity 1: Current Uses of Battery Park City

During this activity, meeting facilitators asked participants about how they currently use the project area. Questions included:

- How do you use the different reach areas?
- Which of these areas do you use most often?
- Which of these areas do you use least often?
- Has the way that you have used these areas changed in the past year? If so, why?
- Which of these areas do you feel is most popular? Least popular? Are they easy to get around? Is there a clear pathway? Is it shared?
- Are there points of access for individuals with disabilities?
- How often do you visit the project site overall?
- What is most important to you about these reach areas?

Responses:

Participants across the three breakout rooms contributed a total of 65 comments in Activity 1.

- We use the area in lots of ways. – One way we use the area is for transportation. Point A to Point B—prefer to go along the water, from South Cove to North Esplanade, Tribeca residents going into BPC
- Active runs/walks—charity walks are common in the Spring and Fall. Active recreation for preschools; bird studies and fish, Billion Oyster Project, sailing at the Marina—historical boats are important to keep

- Non-privatization of space and connection to the water is important to maintain
- There aren't enough places for kids once they're old enough to go places themselves—this area is where kids hang out
- Some of the ways I see the space used —walking the dog, taking sunset photos, sunset walks, chalk art, Volleyball Courts, watching the boats, tourists taking in the sights, kids learning to ride bikes and scooters in areas where there's less crowds
- The park is not like a typical city park—people live here and treat it like their own backyard
- Using the areas across the reaches
- The park is a popular destination for schools
- During the past year, I used the park to sit outside with a friend, socially distanced during COVID
- I use the area for walking and running for exercise
- The North Cove/South Esplanade area is a passive area used by the ferry—commuters. Area is also used for ferry travel, sailing, North/East restaurants and West dog run and volleyball court. It is like a town square
- It is important to keep the softness and connection to the water
- Keeping the area accessible is important
- Reaches have their own distinct personalities (5 and 6 different from 2 and 3)
- Reach 2: Critical and heavily used space for children's play, sports, exercise, relax, community events especially for the schools (PS89 and Stuyvesant High School) and local parties. Safe outdoor place to meet.
- This area is great for raising children—taking children to Rockefeller Park (playground, Tot Lot, lawns, basketball/handball, sculpture)
- It is important to balance climate needs and flooding/receiving without feeling walled in
- Everyone in the family uses these reaches differently (places to gather, places to ride, senior centers on the area, dogs)
- Things not used for the public don't get used— such as the statue locations
- Reach area 1 is a key area for getting to the Battery
- The building located right in front is used for birthday parties
- Area between reach 1 and 2 is problematic
- We use the area for Soccer classes, art, farming classes
- Area is great to get fresh air
- I use the space to take lunch time walks
- Keep using the green space
- Lots of active space
- Area is used for recreational activities, sunbathing, running, etc.
- Bike path, outdoor activity space is useful
- We use the space for playing, hanging out, exercising
- Belvedere Plaza/North Cove often used for corporate events
- Worried about the project leading to reductions in open spaces

- Student usage for educational programming
- Area is used for talent shows, school events
- Schools use parks for flowers, exercise, education
- Stroller friendly safe for parents with kids
- Green space necessary so that people can socially distance
- People are moving back to the area because of green space
- Passion for open space because of pandemic
- Many young children, important to have this area for them
- Green space is beneficial for mental health
- Open space creates opportunity for socialization
- Open spaces more important with surrounding building development increasing
- Least amount of availability with increase in number of people moving to use them
- As a cyclist, having those connections where you can cycle in a protected bike lane is very important for the cycling community.
- The more open space, grass, trees that can be created, the better. Something that can be used for sports and activities. This is important to a lot of people in the area.
- Protected bike lanes are great for safety, and exercise
- I use all of the spots. Rockefeller Park is an everyday place to go to
- Keeping Rockefeller flat is important, because Wagner Park is going to be elevated, having a flat space is very important
- Teardrop Park is another favorite. Less used by adults, more by kids. Flat grassy land with space is good for the kids' activities. Soccer, playground, music classes, etc.
- Rockefeller Park is one of the favorite spots, swings, duck pond
- When I attended Stuyvesant High School, Rockefeller Park was the main place used
- The Ferry terminal is another important place in Battery Park City. Some have mentioned how we need more maritime transportation, Ferry Terminal is important for that
- The Brookfield area is heavily used by professionals, many work-related events happen at Rockefeller Park too
- Around the harbor, the Marina, there are a lot of activities and free entertainment. Very well-kept area
- Accessibility for seniors, and for young children with strollers is very important
- The Esplanade is very important. Prior to Covid, it was a place where the Track teams used to go. Many employees would hang out there. Great for exercise.
- The promenade: I run there, lots of kids and families, the Volleyball court is great, so is the gateway. Many senior citizens hang out in the park
- The Promenade: as you head south, that is where a lot of people spend time doing activities. Walking, biking, fishing.
- Flat spaces will be important to consider when looking at the big picture of the whole community.
- All of these spots have many uses

Breakout Room 1:



Breakout Room 2:



Breakout Room 3:



Activity 2: Shared Priorities for Battery Park City

During this activity, meeting facilitators from the project team asked participants about their shared priorities as they relate to project area. Questions included:

- What is most important to preserve across the entire project site?
- What changes to current conditions might you be most open to?
- What current areas of open space are you most concerned about in this project? Why?
- How would changes to pedestrian and bicycle rights-of-way impact how you move around the project?
- Across the different reaches, there are many memorials and public art installations. How would you feel about changes to these landmarks?
- In what ways would you want future changes to the project site to consider environmental factors and sustainability?
- Which ways of using the project site for recreation or socializing would you most like to maintain?

Responses:

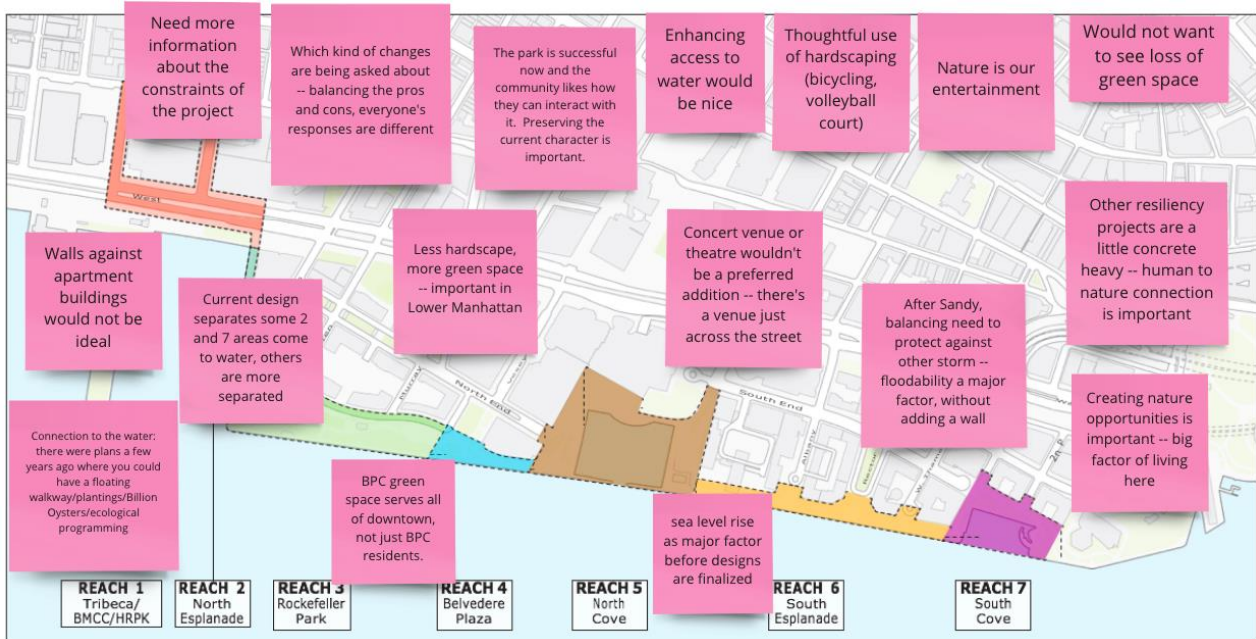
Participants across the three breakout rooms contributed a total of 46 comments in Activity 2.

- Need more information about the constraints of the project
- Which kind of changes are being asked about—balancing the pros and cons, everyone's responses are different
- The park is successful now and the community likes how they can interact with it. Preserving the current character is important.
- Enhancing access to water would be nice
- Thoughtful use of hardscaping (bicycling, volleyball court)
- Nature serves as a source of entertainment
- Would not want to see loss of green space
- Other resiliency projects are a little concrete heavy. Maintaining a human to nature connection is important
- Creating opportunities to be in nature is an important factor of living in the area
- After Sandy, balancing need to protect against other storms. Floodability is a major factor, without adding a wall
- Sea level rise as major factor before designs are finalized
- Concert venue or theatre wouldn't be a preferred addition—there's a venue just across the street
- Less hardscape, more green space—important in Lower Manhattan
- BPC green space serves all of downtown, not just BPC residents.
- Current design separates some 2 and 7 areas come to water, others are more separated

- Connection to the water: there were plans a few years ago where you could have a floating walkway/plantings/Billion Oysters/ecological programming
- Walls against apartment buildings would not be ideal
- Marina: Get rid of ferry terminal?
- Bridge between the parks preserve this area
- Would raising it affect views of parks and water?
- Use landscape to raise where it is not obvious
- Paths need to remain wide enough for walking, biking, etc.
- Need to make sure there is enough space to move around
- How do you have the most minimal demolition when executing this project?
- Use existing walls but maybe elevate them a foot higher
- Need to preserve areas for recreation
- Need to reserve views of the water
- Barrier may affect view, walking, other recreational uses
- Active area, walking, biking, eating
- Are there any plans for what is happening slightly north of the waterfront? Are there resiliency plans there?
- Pier 25 and Hudson River Park are doing nothing with their resiliency efforts. You can't contain flooding in isolation. If they don't act, flooding will still impact Tribeca
- Crossing over to Warren, those crosswalks on the West Side Highway see a lot of bike traffic, very fast bikers riding there. That will be a safety issue for kids
- What is the structure across the bike lane, across 9A? The rain we had from Sandy was due to the water rushing south bound of west Street.
- Green Space is the main thing I find important. Mainly in Rockefeller Park.
- During the second workshop, someone had mentioned misters in the playground. That is a good idea.
- Always concerned about bikes in the City, but not as much on the Promenade. They do go very quickly on the West Side Highway. Concern over a biker hitting a child pedestrian.
- How long would the bike way or the roadway be shut down when deployables are used?
- Another good idea from one of the workshops: It is not possible to expand the pier west, but when we're looking at the green area expand it west. More green space, maybe an outdoor pool. Some way you could soak up and add more green space.
- Area next to Stuyvesant, it's all concrete, there is a lot of opportunity to utilize that space better.
- The area in front of Brookfield, always in the Summer putting up tables with umbrellas. There is no grass or shade. Makes it hard to enjoy the space.
- Sometimes there are complaints about bikers getting too close. However, I rarely see that. There is concern about lines forming around the Ferry Terminal. You could redirect those lines around the Esplanade.
- Don't foresee any really large problems.

- There is some opportunity to expand north, but on the west side we are constrained by the pier headline, which runs along the esplanade.
- In South Battery Park, there is not enough space for Soccer and for the kids to play. The one turf field is oftentimes too crowded, could even be dangerous.

Breakout Room 1:



Breakout Room 2



Breakout Room 3:



Activity 3: New Opportunities in Battery Park City

For the third and final activity, meeting facilitators from the project team asked participants about what opportunities the project might create to improve or enhance the area. Questions included,

- What are some of the opportunities of this project?
- How might we improve or enhance the experience of the project site?
- What changes would you like to see?
- Which reach area would you most like to see reimaged? Why?
- Are there areas where you would like to see access improved? Where?
- In a given Reach Area, what do you wish this area had that it currently does not?
- What other features would you like to see at the project site? In specific reach areas?

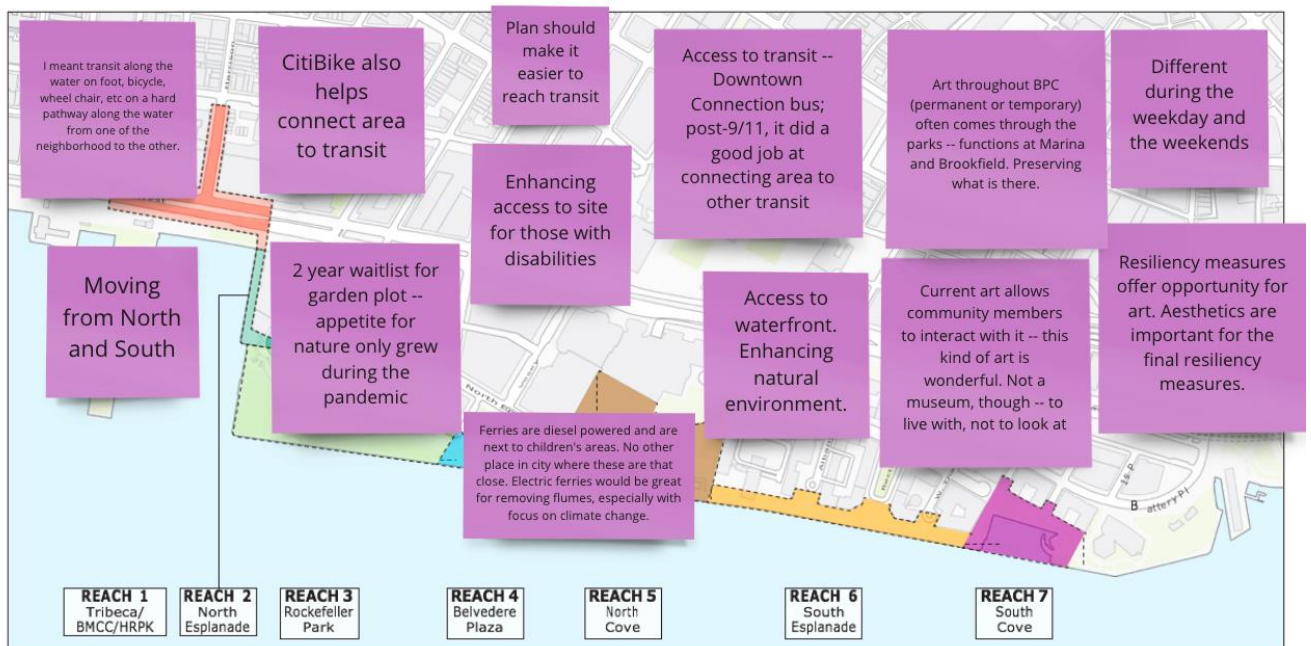
Responses:

Participants across the three breakout rooms contributed a total of 26 comments in Activity 3.

- Improve movability from North and South
- Resiliency plan should make it easier to reach transit
- I meant transit along the water on foot, bicycle, wheelchair, etc. on a hard pathway along the water from one of the neighborhoods to the other.
- Project should enhance access to site for those with disabilities
- Access to transit—Downtown Connection bus; post-9/11, it did a good job at connecting area to other transit
- Citi Bike also helps connect area to transit
- 2-year waitlist for garden plot. Residents' appetites for nature only grew during the pandemic
- Increasing access to the waterfront. Enhancing the natural environment.
- Ferries are diesel powered and are next to children's areas. No other place in the city where these are that close. Electric ferries would be great for removing flumes, especially with focus on climate change.
- Art throughout BPC (permanent or temporary) often comes through the parks -- functions at Marina and Brookfield. Preserving what is there.
- Current art allows community members to interact with it. This kind of art is wonderful. Not a museum, though—to live with, not to look at
- Resiliency measures offer opportunity for art. Aesthetics is important for the final resiliency measures.
- Different during the weekday and the weekends
- Get rid of ferry terminal
- Important to have access to a ferry still
- Stuyvesant High School uses whole area for fire drills
- Landscape can be used at marina

- A lot more green space instead of these hardscape areas
- Some hardscapes used by kids for recreation so need to be aware of this
- My building on River Terrace gets flooding out of Teardrop Park. Flooring in buildings have been replaced twice because of water damage. Individual buildings have to do more. If we can look at other areas where there are higher levels of runoff, that would be helpful.
- Resiliency approaches in places like the Netherlands and Copenhagen. In public parks and plazas, we can rebuild things to include flood protection. Spaces in dry days that are playgrounds can be designed to capture and hold water. That infrastructure prevents flooding and is durable against storm events. Can be landscaped or greenscaped. There is a lot to be learned about that approach.
- On the subject of accessibility, one thing to go on record is that Brookfield building, at Laughing Man, you need a handicap accessible door. Hard to access for people in wheelchairs
- As a visitor, you can never have enough restroom. Some people don't want them, but there could be an opportunity to add more restrooms throughout the area. It would be good for visitors and businesspeople.
- Primarily use the North Cove, get off at the Winter Garden, great events there. Go up the plaza past what used to be the Mercantile Exchange.
- There are a lot of stairs that are placed in a lot of locations vs. ramps. If it could be made to be more seamless so that people can be included. From North Cove Marina to anywhere, there are very few options to get around.
- Very limited access to a lot of places because of stairs. Even esplanade out to the streets, one side may be ramps but there are stairs in many places.

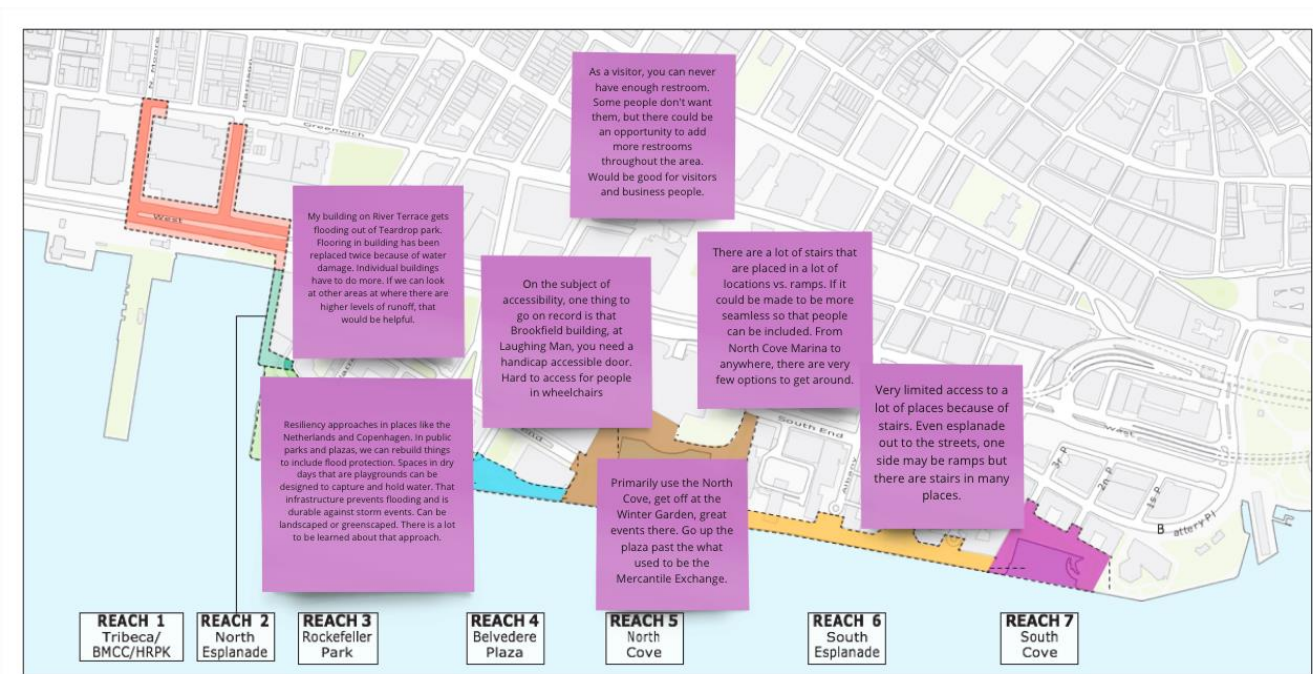
Breakout Room 1:



Breakout Room 2:



Breakout Room 3:



Additional Comments from Chat

Participants also contributed comments in the chat function in Zoom during the presentation portion of the meeting. These contributions are listed below.

Responses:

- Reach 2: Critical and heavily used space for children's play, sports, exercise, relax, community events especially for the schools (PS89 and Stuyvesant High School) and local parties. Safe outdoor place to meet.
- All residents use all of the Reaches regularly.
- We don't have backyards, so we use these spaces and care for them as if they were our own.
- Nature is our entertainment
- We don't need any more hardscape.
- We actually need more green space!
- The community rallied in the hundreds to protect BPC green space this summer. BPC green space serves all of downtown, not just BPC residents.
- No loss of green space or trees. Access to water. Transit, running and walking from one end of the park to the other along the water.
- What about asking how much flooding we can live with.
- Maybe we don't need or want a fortress. I believe Hudson River Park has decided just to live with it.
- I meant transit along the water on foot, bicycle, wheelchair, etc on a hard pathway along the water from one of the neighborhoods to the other.
- It's an important way that people move from North to South
- Thank you from Saskatoon for this learning experience
- Thank you for hosting this important opportunity for public input
- Thank you
- Thank you all!
- Thank you
- Thank you for hosting this!!!